

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1450

By Massey

A RESOLUTION to recognize and honor legendary softball coach Ralph Weekly.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we should pay tribute to those excellent coaches who have led their players to success in athletic competition and in the game of life; and

WHEREAS, one such individual is Ralph Weekly, whose decorated thirty-five-year coaching career is highlighted by his twenty-five years in the State of Tennessee, twenty of which were spent at the helm of the Lady Volunteers softball program; and

WHEREAS, ranking No. 4 all-time among NCAA softball coaches in career wins, Coach Weekly has an overall record of 1,450-481-2, which includes stints at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington, the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK); and

WHEREAS, during Ralph Weekly's time at UTK, the Lady Vols became one of the nation's premier softball programs, reaching the postseason every year since 2004, hosting sixteen straight NCAA Regionals, advancing to eleven Super Regionals, and making seven trips to the Women's College World Series, placing in the top three on five occasions, including two national runner-up finishes; and

WHEREAS, between 2004 and 2013, the Lady Vols put together seven fifty-win seasons, including three straight sixty-plus-win campaigns in 2005, 2006, and 2007; and

WHEREAS, under Coach Weekly's stewardship, Tennessee captured the SEC regular-season title in 2007 and won the SEC tournament title in 2006 and 2011; he received SEC Co-Coach of the Year honors along with his wife, Karen, in 2004 and 2007; and

WHEREAS, the Lady Vols became the first SEC team to reach No. 1 in the polls, spending eleven consecutive weeks at the top during the 2007 season, the same season that UTK became the first SEC program to reach the best-of-three NCAA Championship Series; and

WHEREAS, Ralph Weekly recruited and coached NCAA career strikeout leader Monica Abbott and numerous other UTK greats, establishing a framework for an era of success and ascension that led to the construction of Sherri Parker Lee Stadium, which opened in 2008; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, Coach Weekly was inducted into the National Fastpitch Coaches Association Hall of Fame; he is currently tied as the second-winningest coach in Tennessee Athletics history, with a 949-300-2 (.759) record, trailing only the legendary Pat Summitt; and

WHEREAS, his illustrious coaching tenure is further marked with a pair of gold medals with Team USA softball in the 1996 and 2000 Olympics; he also served as Director of the USA National Teams from 1999-2002 and coached Team USA in fifteen international tournaments, his teams winning gold medals in all fifteen events, including four World Championships and two Pan-American Championships; and

WHEREAS, prior to his celebrated coaching career, Ralph Weekly served in the United States Air Force, his final post being that of commander of the Office of Special Investigations at McChord Air Force Base in Washington State; during his military tenure, which came to a close in 1986, he was awarded the Bronze Star and Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry for outstanding service in the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, throughout his many successes, Mr. Weekly has enjoyed the love and support of his wife, Karen Weekly, and sons, John Weekly and Marc Weekly; and

WHEREAS, Ralph Weekly has distinguished himself as a great softball coach, tactician, and motivator of young women, and he should be appropriately recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

CONCURRING, that we recognize and honor Ralph Weekly, legendary coach of the Lady Volunteers softball program, reflecting on his impressive career with reverence and gratitude.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.